

Introduction

The more I read the Gospels, the more I see the Great Commission. We read variations of the Great Commission in [Matt 28](#), [Mark 16](#), and [Acts 1](#). Christ's commission to the church is proclaim Him among all nations so that people might become disciples of Jesus. We fulfill the Great Commission by the authority of Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit.

A major point of the Gospels is to show Jesus's authority in heaven and on earth. We frequently see Jesus calling or commissioning disciples in the context of demonstrating His authority. I hope you will see Jesus's authority in [Luke 5](#) and respond with **greater faith in Jesus** and **greater confidence in obeying the Great Commission**.

Authority over the fish

[Luke 5:1-3](#) “1 On one occasion, while the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, he was standing by the lake of Gennesaret, 2 and he saw two boats by the lake, but the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. 3 Getting into one of the boats, which was Simon's, he asked him to put out a little from the land. And he sat down and taught the people from the boat.”

In what region (area) was Jesus teaching? [Luke 5:1](#) “1 ... he was standing by the lake of Gennesaret.” The region of Gennesaret was the plains on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee. The lake of Gennesaret refers to the Sea of Galilee.

Whose boat did Jesus board? [Luke 5:3](#) “3 Getting into one of the boats, which was Simon's...” *Who is Simon?* Simon refers to Peter. Jesus gave him the name Peter ([Mark 3:16](#)) which means rock. Cephas is the Aramaic word for rock; Peter is the Greek word for rock. The NT refers to Peter by all three names.

What has Simon and his companions been doing? [Luke 5:2](#) “and he saw two boats by the lake, but the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets.” *Why did Jesus get in Simon's boat?* [Luke 5:3](#) “... And he sat down and taught the people from the boat.” This gave Him an opportunity to better address the crowd. In [Mark 3:9](#), Jesus told the disciples to let him teach from a boat so that they crowd would not press in too closely.

[Luke 5:4-7](#) “4 And when he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, “Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch.” 5 And Simon answered, “Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! But at your word I will let down the nets.” 6 And when they had done this, they enclosed a large number of fish, and their nets were breaking. 7 They signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink.”

What did Jesus instruct Simon to do after His teaching? [Luke 5:4](#) “... he said to Simon, “Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch.”” How successful had Simon and his companions been fishing all night? [Luke 5:5](#) “...“Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! ...”” These were expert fishermen, not men who were fishing for hobby. So, they likely understood fishing well.

*What details show how great their success was now? [Luke 5:6-7](#) “... they enclosed a large number of fish, [1] and their nets were breaking. 7 [2] They signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, [3] so that they began to sink.” How did Jesus know they would be successful now? Jesus did not just **know** that they would be successful; He **made** them successful. Throughout the NT, these fishermen never caught fish without Jesus’s help. **Jesus had authority over the fish.***

[Luke 5:8-11](#) “8 But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus’ knees, saying, “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.” 9 For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish that they had taken, 10 and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, “Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men.” 11 And when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed him.”

What was Simon’s response to the large catch of fish? [Luke 5:8](#) “... he fell down at Jesus’ knees, saying, “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.”” Why did Simon mention his sinfulness in relation to a miraculous catch? Although Simon probably did not understand everything about Jesus, he understood that this catch was miraculous. So, he recognized at least that Jesus was from God (cf. [Isa 6:1-5](#)).

Who was fishing with Simon? [Luke 5:10](#) “and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon...” Typically, Simon would fish with Andrew, his brother. Andrew isn’t mentioned here, but verses 6-7 indicate that there were others in the boat (using the word “they”), so Andrew may have been there, too.

What did Jesus say they would begin to catch? [Luke 5:10](#) “... from now on you will be catching men.” Sometimes people observe wordplay between “fishermen” and “fishers of men.” That wordplay only works in English. The word “men” is not in “fishermen” in Greek.

What was their response to Jesus’s expectation? [Luke 5:11](#) “... they left everything and followed him.” They left their boats, but also their careers and family.

Jesus’s authority over leprosy

[Luke 5:12-13](#) “12 While he was in one of the cities, there came a man full of leprosy. And when he saw Jesus, he fell on his face and begged him, “Lord, if you will, you can make me

clean.” 13 And Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him, saying, “I will; be clean.” And immediately the leprosy left him.”

What did the leper request from Jesus? [Luke 5:12](#) “... Lord, if you will, you can make me clean.” *What requirements were laid on lepers regarding their interaction with people?* Leprosy was a highly contagious illness. Lepers were required to stay in isolation. They could not be around other people. [Leviticus 13:45–46](#) “45 “The leprous person who has the disease shall wear torn clothes and let the hair of his head hang loose, and he shall cover his upper lip and cry out, ‘Unclean, unclean.’ 46 He shall remain unclean as long as he has the disease. He is unclean. He shall live alone. His dwelling shall be outside the camp.”

What did Jesus do in response to the leper’s request? [Luke 5:13](#) “13 And Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him, saying, “I will; be clean.” And immediately the leprosy left him.” *Why was Jesus willing to touch the leper?* Jesus was clearly not worried about catching leprosy. *How was Jesus able to heal the leper?* **Jesus had authority over illnesses.**

[Luke 5:14–16](#) “14 And he charged him to tell no one, but “go and show yourself to the priest, and make an offering for your cleansing, as Moses commanded, for a proof to them.” 15 But now even more the report about him went abroad, and great crowds gathered to hear him and to be healed of their infirmities. 16 But he would withdraw to desolate places and pray.”

What did Jesus tell the leper to do after his healing? [Luke 5:14](#) “... go and show yourself to the priest, and make an offering for your cleansing, as Moses commanded, for a proof to them.” [Leviticus 14](#) states that a leper who had been healed should offer a sacrificial offering and the priest would make an atonement for him.

Jesus also told him [Luke 5:14](#) “And he charged him to tell no one ...” [Mark 1:45](#) says the man “went out and began to talk freely about it.” *What happened as a result of Jesus’s fame?* [Luke 5:15](#) “... great crowds gathered to hear him and to be healed of their infirmities.” This was a great opportunity for Jesus, right? Not every opportunity is God’s will. *How did Jesus respond to the great crowds?* [Luke 5:16](#) “But he would withdraw to desolate places and pray.” Jesus frequently left people in need and left teaching opportunities to pray (see [Mark 1:35-39](#)). This is a great lesson for Christians. We often don’t have time to pray, but Jesus gave up very important things for prayer. If Jesus thought prayer was more important than healing people, we should consider prayer more important than sleep, earning money, and watching television.

Jesus’s authority over sins

[Luke 5:17–19](#) “17 On one of those days, as he was teaching, Pharisees and teachers of the law were sitting there, who had come from every village of Galilee and Judea and from Jerusalem. And the power of the Lord was with him to heal. 18 And behold, some men were bringing on a bed a man who was paralyzed, and they were seeking to bring him in and lay

him before Jesus, 19 but finding no way to bring him in, because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and let him down with his bed through the tiles into the midst before Jesus.”

Who had come to hear Jesus teach? [Luke 5:17](#) “... Pharisees and teachers of the law were sitting there, who had come from every village of Galilee and Judea and from Jerusalem...” Jesus’s fame had spread. I suspect, based on their common responses, that they were coming with skepticism, not to learn.

How was Jesus able to heal? [Luke 5:17](#) “... And the power of the Lord was with him to heal.”

Who was brought to Jesus for healing? [Luke 5:18](#) “... some men were bringing on a bed a man who was paralyzed...” *How did they get the paralytic to Jesus?* [Luke 5:19](#) “... they went up on the roof and let him down with his bed through the tiles ...” Mark says that they removed part of the roof above Jesus ([Mark 2:4](#)). Luke clarifies that they removed tiles.

[Luke 5:20–21](#) “20 And when he saw their faith, he said, “Man, your sins are forgiven you.” 21 And the scribes and the Pharisees began to question, saying, “Who is this who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone?””

How did Jesus respond to their faith? [Luke 5:20](#) “20 And when he saw their faith, he said, “Man, your sins are forgiven you.”” Some assume that “their faith” refers to the men who brought the paralytic; therefore, people often question why Jesus would forgive the paralytic’s sins because of the faith of someone else. However, it is more reasonable that “their faith” refers to the paralytic and his friends, not just the friends.

Why did the scribes and Pharisees accuse Jesus of blasphemy? [Luke 5:21](#) “... “Who is this who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone?”” This is a true statement; however, their critique misses the important detail that Jesus is God.

[Luke 5:22–26](#) “22 When Jesus perceived their thoughts, he answered them, “Why do you question in your hearts? 23 Which is easier, to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven you,’ or to say, ‘Rise and walk’? 24 But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins”—he said to the man who was paralyzed—“I say to you, rise, pick up your bed and go home.” 25 And immediately he rose up before them and picked up what he had been lying on and went home, glorifying God. 26 And amazement seized them all, and they glorified God and were filled with awe, saying, “We have seen extraordinary things today.””

What did Jesus command the paralytic to do? [Luke 5:24](#) “... he said to the man who was paralyzed—“I say to you, rise, pick up your bed and go home.”” *Why did Jesus say he healed the paralytic?* [Luke 5:24](#) “24 But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins ...” Jesus’s point was that His authority over illness supported His authority over sins.

What was the paralytic’s response? [Luke 5:25](#) “... he rose up before them and picked up what he had been lying on and went home, glorifying God.” *What was the crowd’s response?* [Luke](#)

[5:26](#) “26 And amazement seized them all, and they glorified God ...” The crowd glorified God because of the miracle, which showed that **Jesus has authority to forgive sins**.

Jesus calls Levi

[Luke 5:27–28](#) “27 After this he went out and saw a tax collector named Levi, sitting at the tax booth. And he said to him, “Follow me.” 28 And leaving everything, he rose and followed him.”

Who did Jesus call to follow Him? Jesus called **Levi**. *Who was Levi?* Levi was a tax collector. He is also called Matthew. [Matthew 9:9](#) “9 As Jesus passed on from there, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him, “Follow me.” And he rose and followed him.”

What was Levi’s response? [Luke 5:28](#) “28 And leaving everything, he rose and followed him.” Notice the pattern of true disciples. They leave everything and follow Jesus. *What are you holding on to that you need to leave behind to follow Jesus?*

[Luke 5:29–32](#) “29 And Levi made him a great feast in his house, and there was a large company of tax collectors and others reclining at table with them. 30 And the Pharisees and their scribes grumbled at his disciples, saying, “Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?” 31 And Jesus answered them, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. 32 I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.””

Who did Levi invite to his feast? [Luke 5:29](#) “... there was a large company of tax collectors and others reclining at table with them.” *Why did the Pharisees criticize Jesus and His disciples?* [Luke 5:30](#) “... “Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?”” Their point was based on holiness. An aspect of holiness is separation from sin. Just like Jesus touching the leper, Jesus is not made unclean by sinners - sinners are made clean by Jesus.

Why did Jesus say He had come? [Luke 5:32](#) “32 I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.”” He did not come to heal people of illness or call the righteous. He came to call people to repent.

Conclusion

What does the miraculous catch of fish teach us about Jesus? Jesus has authority over creation (including fish).

What does the healing of the leper and the paralytic teach us about Jesus? Jesus has authority over illness.

What did Jesus teach about His authority over sins? Jesus taught that He had authority to forgive sins, even though that authority belongs to God alone.

How did people of faith (e.g., the disciples) respond to seeing Jesus's authority? They left everything and followed Him.

Reflection: *Why don't we share the gospel with people?* Because **theologically**, we believe that Jesus has all authority, but **in the real world**, we don't believe Jesus has authority over those conversations. *Why do we hold on to so many things of the world (rather than leaving everything)?* Because **theologically**, we believe that Jesus has all authority, but **in the real world**, we don't believe that Jesus has authority over those parts of our life.

If Jesus has all authority in heaven and on earth, then He has authority in every realm of your life.

Why did Jesus refer to Himself as the "Son of Man" in verse 24? [Luke 5:24](#) "24 But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"—he said to the man who was paralyzed—"I say to you, rise, pick up your bed and go home." This does not merely refer to His humanity. For example, Jesus asked the blind man whom He had healed in [John 9:35](#) "... Do you believe in the Son of Man?" This refers back to [Daniel 7:13-14](#), which Jesus references during His trial ([Matt 26:64](#)).

[Daniel 7:13-14](#) "13 "I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. 14 And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed."

Jesus has all authority in heaven and on earth ([Matt 28:18](#)). The right response to that authority is (1) to leave everything and follow Him and (2) to make disciples of all nations.